

## Written evidence submitted by Miss Holly Petch (GRA0017)

### The Government's response to the GRA consultation:

- Will the Government's proposed changes meet its aim of making the process "kinder and more straight forward"?  
*The process of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate will not receive any fundamental change. It still costs money to obtain one, and a committee is still used to determine whether applicants are deserving of a GRC.*
- Should a fee for obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate be removed or retained? Are there other financial burdens on applicants that could be removed or retained?  
*The fee poses an unnecessary limitation on who can obtain a GRC, as only people who can afford the "nominal fee" can try to obtain one. There is still the risk that the GRC request can be refused by the non-transgender committee reviewing each request.*
- Should the requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria be removed?  
*The Dysphoria diagnosis is perfectly fine, provided it is being provided by a GP or other medical professional who not only has been appropriately trained in transgender healthcare but also carries the transgender patient's best interests at heart.*
- Should there be changes to the requirement for individuals to have lived in their acquired gender for at least two years?  
*This is a GRA requirement that has existed for several decades, coined in an era of healthcare that sought to discourage people from undergoing transition. The two year requirement places another unnecessary delay on trans people obtaining the paperwork required to use their real name in multiple areas of their lives, including their marriage vows and on their gravestone.*
- What is your view of the statutory declaration and should any changes have been made to it?  
*The Statutory Declaration is a more appropriate method of verifying a change of gender, as a legal professional is needed as a witness and the trans person remains in control of the process.*
- Does the spousal consent provision in the Act need reforming? If so, how? If it needs reforming or removal, is anything else needed to protect any rights of the spouse or civil partner?  
*The rights of the spouse are not affected by the trans person's transition itself, but instead is harmed severely by the current GRA requirements. Currently, if the trans person wants to have their correct name on their marriage certificate, they must divorce their partner and remarry under their new name, as well as complete all the paperwork required to do both.*

- Should the age limit at which people can apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) be lowered?  
*For younger transgender people, an age limit on obtaining a GRC does nothing but add unnecessary restraints on their ability to live their lives without worry. Most people are able to formulate their gender identity around a young age.*
- What impact will these proposed changes have on those people applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate, and on trans people more generally?  
*These proposed changes, while welcome, are still not enough to alleviate the unnecessary suffering placed on Transgender Britons trying to navigate the current UK transition service. Over 70% of respondents expressed a favorable response to the wider GRA reform that was initially proposed, it is insulting to ask about the impact of those changes again.*
- What else should the Government have included in its proposals, if anything?  
*The government should not have dialed back on their promises of reforming the GRA system and implemented all of the reforms that they were advised to implement in the first place.*
- Does the Scottish Government's proposed Bill offer a more suitable alternative to reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004?  
*The draft bill that the Scottish Government introduced to reform the GRA in 2019 are almost universally better for transgender people than either the current UK rules in place or the limited reform already put forward.*

#### **Wider issues concerning transgender equality and current legislation:**

- Why is the number of people applying for GRCs so low compared to the number of people identifying as transgender?  
*The unnecessary cost combined with the risk that their application will be arbitrarily denied is significant enough to discourage people from applying to begin with, often because they cannot afford multiple attempts to have their name and gender legally changed in the current manner.*
- Are there challenges in the way the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010 interact? For example, in terms of the different language and terminology used across both pieces of legislation.  
*There are no challenges. Any potential conflicts between either Act should be resolved by using whichever Act would have the Transgender community's best interests at heart. Transgender people are not a fad, they should not be mandated out of existence.*
- Are the provisions in the Equality Act for the provision of single-sex and separate-sex spaces and facilities in some circumstances clear and useable for service providers and service users? If not, is reform or further guidance needed?  
*They are sufficiently clear, despite there being specific rules allowing services to exclude transgender women from crisis support services.*

- Does the Equality Act adequately protect trans people? If not, what reforms, if any, are needed

*The Equality Act has sufficient rules for supporting trans people. The problems arising in society are stemming from the fact that these rules are being ignored on a widespread basis.*

- What issues do trans people have in accessing support services, including health and social care services, domestic violence and sexual violence services?

*The vast majority of issues stem from the support services in question actively keeping trans people from using their services. Either due to being ill-informed about trans people or maliciously excluding them due to their own beliefs in violation of the Equality Act.*

- Are legal reforms needed to better support the rights of gender-fluid and non-binary people? If so, how?

*Many legal reforms are needed to support every gender-nonconforming person in the UK. However, effort must be made not only to contact transgender groups for their advice, but caution must be maintained to keep hateful parties throughout both the community and the government from misinforming the inquiry with hurtful myths about the trans community.*

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